

Urban Renewal and Social Cohesion: Case Study on the Malburgen District, Arnhem, the Netherlands.



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Abstract

Malburgen is an urban district in the Southern part of Arnhem with a population of approximately 17,000 inhabitants (2000 data). The Malburgen district was designed as a garden suburb in the thirties of the last century as the first city extension south of the river. The original plan was altered for the large need of cheap housing stock after the completion of World War II. There were more low-cost houses built than planned and the density of housing was significantly higher, with an increased number of apartment blocks. Malburgen became one of the least attractive urban districts of Arnhem characterized by mainly densely built and cheap rental apartment blocks. Social problems became rampant and the level of services and facilities decreased.

From the early 90ties, an urban renewal process was started with initially a focus on incremental improvements. With results not being satisfactorily, the municipality opted for a more fundamental approach by adopting the Development Plan Malburgen (1998). Main element was to return to the original concept of a garden city, by making large scale investments in improvement of public space, mixed housing development and demolition of large parts of the deteriorated housing stock.

As part of the large scale urban renewal programme three new school complexes were built and linked with Multi-functional Educational – and Care Centres (MOZC's). They provide different facilities and form a central element in the approach to provide more social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

The paper explores to what extend Malburgen, with a high percentage of immigrant population benefits from this facility by better integration of migrant women and children and social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

Data for the case study have been collected by the same author in the framework of the ex-post evaluation of the ERDF supported Programme for the Larger Cities in the Netherlands for the period 2000 – 2006. Opinions expressed in the study are those of the author only.

1. Introduction

The Malburgen district was designed as a garden suburb in the thirties of the last century as the first city extension south of the river. The original plan was altered for the large need of cheap housing stock after the completion of World War II. There were more low-cost houses built than planned and the density of housing was significantly higher, with an increased number of apartment blocks. Around 60% of the housing was constructed as low-rise apartment blocks. Of the 7,000 housing units built, 80% was social housing. About 90% of these houses were owned by the housing corporation 'Volkshuisvesting'. In 2000 Malburgen had a population of approximately 17,000 inhabitants. From midway the 70ties, the quality of the housing stock declined and demand with middle – and higher income groups was low. Quality of construction was often poor, many apartments and houses were too small as per modern standards and had low comfort standards owing to bad insulation and the lack of modern heating systems. Malburgen became one of the least attractive urban districts of Arnhem characterized by mainly densely built and cheap rental apartment blocks. Social problems became rampant and the level of services and facilities decreased.

From the early 90ties, neighbourhood committees developed plans for incremental improvements. Since this was not yielding sufficient results, 'Volkshuisvesting', through a participation process with citizens, opted for more fundamental measures by adopting a Masterplan (1996) followed by the adoption of the Development Plan Malburgen (1998). A partnership was established between the housing corporation and the municipality based on the agreement that both would invest in rehabilitation of the district. It included an improved service provision in the whole district such as schools, shops and sport facilities. Individual house owners were encouraged to improve their houses, while the corporation took responsibility for the rental stock. Main element of the Strategy was to return to the original concept of a garden city, by making large scale investments in improvement of public space, mixed housing development and demolition of large parts of the deteriorated housing stock.



Pictures: New and old urban elements.

As central element in the urban renewal process, three new large educational facilities were established strategically located in different parts of the district. In one of these complexes, the Malburcht, the MOZC is located which provides for a wide range of community services, including social, recreational – and cultural activities, sports facilities, day-care centre and other services contributing to social cohesion in the

neighbourhood. The day-care centre provides facilities for care of children, pre-, after and in-between school hours. Services are offered by public/private entities with activities largely subsidized by government.

MOZC facilities offer a wide range of activities, including:

- Sport activities for different categories of children.
- Social – and cultural activities for children in the age group 4 - 14.
- Social – and cultural activities, fitness and care facilities for the elderly.
- Health facility for pregnant women and young mothers and their new born's.

For operation of the facilities, at city level a management structure was established which includes representatives of the different service providers which are a sports agency, socio-cultural organization and provider of daycare facilities. The MOZC facilities replace the previously fragmented system of service delivery by a central facility. At location level a coordination structure is established with participation of schools and the different organizations offering specific services at the MOZC.

The map below presents the location of the Malburgen district in Arnhem:



Source: Development Plan Malburgen,

2. Strategic framework

The urban renewal programme in Malburgen forms part of the national programme 'Policy for the Larger Cities', the GSB. In addition to national government support it also received support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the programming period 2000 – 2006. The GSB programme was introduced in 1994 and consists of three components: improvement of the physical environment, social environment and the economy. Physical investments are made under the Investment Budget Urban Renewal (ISV) introduced in 2000. Purpose of the ISV is improvement of the physical (and social) living environment of the city and maintaining / re-establishment of interest with the middle – and upper income categories in living in the city. Financially, in principle, no direct investments are made in the housing stock. This is seen as the responsibility of private/semi-public parties, but in improvement of public space and facilitation of the planning process. Governmental subsidies are seen as multiplier funds, which should attract investments by public/private parties including real estate investment funds, housing corporations, companies and house owners.

The basis for ISV allocation is formed by multi-year development plans (MOPs), prepared by the municipalities and having a time horizon of 4 years. In a MOP city-wide targets are set. A target related subsidy is provided based on contributions of different central government ministries. In addition, under the GSB, priority neighbourhoods were selected which require an integrated approach for rehabilitation. Here ISV funds are matched with investments in social cohesion aspects and economic development measures. In 30 of the largest cities (G30), 56 of such neighbourhoods were identified. One of these is the Malburgen district.

In this paper we address the questions to what extent the urban renewal process in Malburgen has contributed to more social cohesion between the different communities and better living conditions. More specifically we are interested in what the role and contribution of MOZC facilities make. For the purpose of our research we focus thereby on Malburgen East – North which is the location of the Malburcht, one of the three new school complexes which were linked with MOZC facilities.

3. Urban renewal process

In a study of the municipality it was indicated that the coming 15 year the demographic composition of Malburgen would be affected by changes in household composition, age, ethnic origin and socio-economic position. The main reason is the restructuring of the district with demolition of old structures and new housing developments. Other factors also influencing the future demographic composition of the district are greening of the area, ageing of the population and the trend towards smaller households. (Gemeente Arnhem, 2005).

For Malburgen East – North the housing characteristics would be largely social housing, mainly one-family houses, long average period of stay of residents in one house, large number of 1-person households and families, relatively low percentage of

migrant population of about 25%, many original inhabitants staying in the neighbourhood having low incomes and being non-active and high level of community involvement.

Table: Housing development in Malburgen East - North

Period	Initial housing stock	Demolished	New structures	Housing stock after intervention
2002-2006	2.101	146	75	2.030
2006-2008	2.030	0	586	2.616
2008-2012	2.616	120	194	2.690
2012-2015	2.690	0	0	2.690

Source: Gemeente Arnhem 2005.

As shown in the Table between 2006 and 2008 quite a large number of new housing units became available. The population would increase from 4.500 to 6.000. There would also be an influx of two-person households with and without children resulting in more young families in the district. On the other side there is the construction of a large complex for the elderly. The expectation is that percentage of migrant population would gradually decrease.

In analyzing the urban renewal process in Malburgen, the typology as developed by Robson et.al. (2009) is of relevance. Based on demographic developments and characteristics of households, they distinguish between four 'ideal types' of functional roles that are played by deprived neighbourhoods. These are described as follows:

- *Transit areas* are deprived neighbourhoods in which most in-movers come from less deprived areas and most out-movers go to less deprived areas.
- *Escalator areas* has in-movers come from areas that are equally or more deprived, the neighbourhood becomes part of a continuous onward-and-upward progression through the housing and labour markets.
- *Gentrifier areas* are ones in which there is a degree of social improvement since most in-movers come from less deprived areas and most out-movers go to similarly or more deprived areas.
- *Isolate areas* represent neighbourhoods in which households come from and move to areas that are equally or more deprived. Hence they can be seen as neighbourhoods that are associated with a degree of entrapment of poor households who are unable to break out of living in deprived areas.

When we characterize the urban renewal process in Malburgen we can observe that with large scale housing development, the Municipality has attempted a 'gentrification' process by a 'conscious process of markedly richer households displacing markedly poorer households'. Next to new constructions, older neighbourhoods are renovated and here the purpose is to break through the social deprivation of the 'isolate areas' by creating upward mobility. With the district being one of the most deprived urban areas of Arnhem, the concepts of transit and escalator areas are less relevant and require further analysis to consider their relevance.

4. Social cohesion aspects

In developing more social cohesion in Malburgen, an important role was reserved for the three new school complexes and attached multi-cultural facilities (MOZC's). In 2007 the MOZC facility, linked to the new school complex the Malburcht, was put into operation. It serves the North - Eastern part of Malburgen and was developed by the Municipality of Arnhem with financial support of the ERDF. For operation of the MOZC a coordination structure was established of service providers. Initially, the management arrangement included local providers only. Later, for all similar facilities being established in the city of Arnhem with 8 new schools applying the same concept, an overall management structure of service providers was established. For coordination of activities a Steering committee was established. Each agency has an independent management structure however and is largely subsidized by the municipality.



Pictures: The Malburcht school complex

For coordination of the activities in the MOZC in the Malburcht, a coordination team was formed, the Bos team. It meets once in the 6 weeks. Participants include the two primary schools located in the Malburcht. One is the Margarethaschool, in origin a catholic school, with 255 pupils. The second school is a public school, the Monchyschool with 160 pupils. Sportbedrijf Arnhem is a public/private agency providing sport facilities in the city and has a branch at the Malburcht. Rijnstad is also a public/private party and provides welfare and social support services in the municipality. It has a coordinator and several staff members for different types of activities organized at the Malburcht and there is participation of about 60 volunteers from different communities. SKAR is an organization providing day care for children.

Interviews and project data indicate that MOZC facilities are well used and frequented and show a balanced participation in neighbourhoods with a mixed ethnic composition and clearly answer a demand for such facilities. These opinions were supported by interviews made during field visits to a selected number of such facilities.

Once in the two weeks, on Sunday, Rijnstad organizes club activities for children from the neighbourhood around different themes. Normally, around 60 children participate but attendance goes up and reached 75 the last time. The club offers 7 different activities during the afternoon. One of them is Arabic lessons and next to children from migrant communities also children with a non-islamic background participate, wanting to learn more about their friends. The club also pays attention to cultural notions of different ethnic communities, a theme like 'pestering other children' at school and other aspects of living together in the same neighbourhood.

Name of the club is A-salaam (peace). On Wednesday evening there is a girl's club. In after-school activities every week between 150 – 200 children participate in the age group of 4 – 14 yrs old. Malburcht has a hobby club and has a site at Hyves. On Wednesday afternoons there is now Kinderwerk (children's work) which started with a group of 10 – 15 participants but is expected to grow in attendance when the facility becomes better known. There are also clubs with cooking classes and sewing. Depending on the type of activities, there is a balanced participation from different communities with a division of about 50 – 50.

Day care facilities includes the Lindehart, offering after-school facilities and has participation of 20 – 30 children. The in-between school facility caters to about 50 children. The day care facility has 18 children. Two courses are conducted for parents understanding their children (age group 2 - 4 yrs old) better.

For migrant women there are Dutch language classes with participation of mostly elderly women and lessons are given by a female teacher from the same community.

In June, the Malburcht organizes an open day for the whole neighbourhood with a large number of activities which is normally attended by many people and not only by parents and children from the two schools.

Sport activities are organized for children from both the two schools but have participation from children which are attending other schools as well but live in the neighbourhood. Facilities are also used by sport clubs from the neighbourhood and matches.

Participation of women in the labour market is promoted by offering the central facility of the MOZC. It has been particularly successful because of the introduction of national initiatives of financial – and legal measures promoting the same. It made day care for children much cheaper and attractive also for lower income groups and the number of facilities for child care increased substantially.

Day care facilities are offered now at a rate of about €6.50, - per hour, per child. However, this is the gross contribution and after deduction of tax about half remains of what actually is paid. Women which are attending (mandatory) activities as per arrangement of the government, such as schooling activities and Dutch language classes organized in the context of the national programme to promote integration and acculturation, can bring their children to day care facilities for €3 per month, which is almost free of costs.





Pictures: Health check, sewing class, activities for the elderly and Dutch language class.

Also neighbourhood activities are facilitated with the principle that initiative should come from the neighbourhood itself. The latter initially with hesitance, active inhabitants feeling attached to their old facilities, now gradually with more success and with support of the MOZC and the neighbourhood facilitator of the Municipality. The Box below presents some reflections from the users survey done for the MOZC facilities.

In the MOZS facilities of Malburgen it is unavoidable to organize matters well. There is a need to share the use of facilities and it implies that consideration has to be given to each other. To do this properly, there is a need for rules and coordination. The presence of different institutions in one location offers the possibility to make informal arrangements.

The level of spirit and commitment of cooperation depends on the people concerned. It is noted that people who are *positive* about how things go are also those who know how to organize activities. They are less disturbed by matters organized differently than in the past and are output oriented wanting to get things done and use there to more informal methods in a creative way. Their ideas develop while talking in the corridors and are decided upon during lunch. Flexibility and personal contact are the success factors.

Source: Holland Branding Group, 2008.

In implementation a number of constraints were observed. They can be summarized as follows:

- Preparation of the operational plan for outreach activities of the MOZC was delayed initially. Arrangements to be made for relocation of facilities to the new centre, the establishment of a cooperation agreement between the different partners and the development of a synergy in approach and objectives, turned out to be more time demanding than originally expected. It was resolved by the nomination of a 'facilitator' in 2005, after which better progress was made (Gemeente Arnhem, 2007).
- Cooperation between the different service providers was initially constrained by each operating as per its own Agenda and priorities. Increasingly, through regular meetings activities are better synchronized. It has resulted in

organizing events around certain themes in which all organizations participate and contribute, e.g. open day, sports day. There are now also guidelines being prepared with ideas on what each partner could contribute when such joint activities are organized. There is now also more flexibility in use of space.

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To determine the impact of the MOZC it would be of interest to know the number of users of facilities as per ethnic origin and gender. However, as indicated by the municipality of Arnhem there was a certain sensitivity involved in maintaining data on ethnic origin. Disaggregation of data was also felt to be not relevant since ethnic composition is to a large extent determined by location of the activity and sector of intervention. Measuring of the wider impact of establishing such a facility would require in-depth research and normally is beyond the capacity of the municipality and perhaps would also not be justified against the investment made. Such research takes place at the national level and is done by NICIS, an institute which is doing research on different aspects of the GSB programme as per request of Government. Also gender specific data are not maintained.

MOZC impact cannot be analysed therefore as per segregated statistical data as per gender and ethnic origin. Interviews and project data suggest however that these facilities are well used and frequented and show a balanced participation in neighbourhoods with a mixed ethnic composition and clearly answer a demand for such facilities. These opinions were supported by interviews made during field visits to a selected number of such facilities.

As for the wider impact of the MOZC one of the questions would be what the effect has been on the position of women in terms of facilitation of entry into the labour market, extension of number of hours worked and better social/cultural integration of women from different ethnic origin.

In a recent study of the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands on part-time work of women (2008), it was observed that the number of hours worked by women increased markedly in recent decades and more so in the Netherlands than in other European countries. The increase was due entirely to the growth in the number of women with a part-time job; there has been no change in the proportion of women with full-time jobs over the same period: in 2006, 20% of women aged 50-64 years were in full-time jobs, the same as in 1985.

A number of financial – and legal measures were responsible for the improved participation of women in the labour market. The effect was that child care became cheaper for especially the lower income groups and the number of facilities for child care increased substantially.

As for gender relations, Arnhem follows the same progressive trend as was observed for the Netherlands with a steady increase of the participation rate of women and narrowing of the gap between men and women as for differences in unemployment rate. An improved level of gender equality as suggested by these indicators is caused by a shift in cultural notions about the position of men and women in society and a consistent national and local policy of improving the legal possibilities for women to work and introducing a coherent set of subsidies and facilities for daycare of children. The Arnhem region, same as for the country, has a high percentage of women working part time only and increase in the number of working hours is seen as a priority therefore. The second priority is to ensure a higher social participation of women from those ethnic minorities which have stayed behind in this respect. The latter is of particular relevance for the Malburgen district which has a larger share of ethnic minorities as compared to the city as a whole.

There are positive indications therefore that daycare / after-school facilities offered at the MOZC have a positive effect on higher participation rates of women in the labour process and extension of the number of hours worked, but they are not evidenced. There are no indications also to what extent it applies to women from ethnic minorities.

In the interviews it was emphasized that the wide range of activities offered at the MOZC have an appeal to different age groups, communities and social classes and brings people out of their social isolation. By having activities for the two schools together there is no longer fighting between children from the different schools. Children from different communities play now together and visit each other on birthdays. The Sunday club, A-salaam, has contributed to a much better understanding of each others background and cultural identity. This includes the perceptions which migrant children have of their 'Dutch' neighbours.

5. Sustainability and Transferability

Responsibility for operation of the MOZC facility has been assumed by a Society established for management of all existing and newly planned school facilities sharing the concept of offering a wide range of educational facilities combined with multi-functional community services. In total there will 8 such school complexes in Arnhem. The management structure includes representatives of organizations responsible for providing the offered range of facilities. The MOZC has a high level of sustainability therefore, with the possible exception that it assumes that central government subsidies to day care facilities are continued at the same level and remain affordable to low-income households.

The MOZC model is transferable to other urban districts and towns. Actually, in Arnhem itself the model has already been replicated and similar facilities have been established. Interviews learned that with the MOZC being the first facility of its kind which was established there have been a number of lessons which are taken into account now with the design of new facilities. Presikshaaf, another district in Arnhem,

is developing at this moment a similar facility and has drawn a number of important lessons for replication of the model. We summarize them below:

The MOZC was designed as a complex consisting of different entities each having its own identity. The new complex will change that and provide for one common entrance for all.

In design of the MOZC insufficient attention was paid to wishes and demands of the future users. For example, there is a kitchen now for the cooking lessons without an oven. There is one common hall for both the two schools which is not enough for organizing all activities which often have to take place at the same day and time. There is no sports field and the play ground for children could have been more child friendly.

One of the main constraints has been the multiple use of space for different activities and the image of a 'school facility'. There is one hall for bingo and aerobics; one room hobby club and meetings. Sharing such facility makes it impossible to build an own identity for each. There are also no possibilities at the MOZC to make the space you own and create an identity. The girls club meets in a room which looks like a meeting room, there is no possibility to go outside when the weather is good, it is not possible to hang curtains and you cannot stick anything to the walls. Also, having the facility linked to a school complex creates a certain distance from communities. They do not easily walk in and especially parents and children who do not have children at the school.

For Presikshaaf therefore a different approach was followed and several visits have been made to the MOZC to learn from its experiences. In design of its building right from the initial stage future users are involved providing their suggestions.

Initially, the MOZC met with resistance from communities which were used to their own facility where they were used to meeting each other and could make their own arrangements. The shift from the familiar environment to a new 'school-like' facility was not appreciated by everyone. It has been one of the main reasons why it took time for activities to take off and get sufficient attention. Now, with a coordinator for the activities, staff and a structure it gets better every day and the MOZC gets better accepted now. The shift had also positive effects however by changing old habits and practices. The old neighbourhood centres were largely catering to their own communities with little integration between them. For the MOZC that is different with participation of all in the same place. The number of volunteers (60) is still less as compared to the old situation (100) but there is a much larger contribution of women from other ethnic communities and the number is growing again. Volunteers working together for a common purpose also results in a better understanding between communities.

Presikshaaf learned from that by nominating right from the beginning a coordinator who consults the different communities and centres about their preferences and motivates them to participate in making the new facility successful right from its start.

For wider replication of the MOZC model it is of importance that the Malburgen programme is supported by the GSB programme which is implemented at national

scale and includes 30 of the largest cities. Through the GSB, the Malburgen approach has been presented as a Best Practice and received wide attention.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The concentration, enhanced quality and increased capacity of community services at the MOZC facility supported social cohesion in the neighbourhood and a better reconciliation of work and family life. Also, it can be argued that the measures increased women's inclusion in the labour market by reducing the amount of care activities they are usually in charge of. Progressive national policies for providing day care for children with subsidy levels reaching 90% of costs, the MOZC facility answers a high demand for such services.

Main lessons learned are:

- Establishment of the MOZC facility being linked to school facilities and providing a wide range of day care facilities and social – and cultural activities, has made a large contribution to social inclusion and gender equality. Together with subsidized costs of day care facilities it is instrumental in providing women better access to the labour market. Wide use is made of the facility by different communities and it forms an important unifying factor in the neighbourhood.
- The project was well integrated in the development framework at municipal level. Sustainability of the interventions was assured thereby and a framework was created of partnership between the municipality and public/private sectors, neighbourhood associations and private sector initiatives.
- Investment was based on integration in multi-year government driven investment programs offering a long-term development perspective of urban restructuring.
- Sustainability of the interventions was assured by a partnership approach of public sectors, local authorities, neighbourhood associations and private sector initiatives and the creation of a management structure of service providers for operation of this type of facilities.
- For operation of the MOZC facility a combined management structure was established for all similar facilities in the Municipality of Arnhem. It includes organizations responsible for providing the different services and outreach activities.
- Establishment of the operational plan at the MOZC level turned out to be more complicated and time consuming than originally expected and was overcome by the appointment of a 'coordinator'.
- The MOZC being the first of its kind in Arnhem provided important lessons to similar facilities created at a later stage and has become a model and example for community development.

As overall conclusion we can state that the structural approach as applied to the Malburgen district is of particular relevance in this context. Through a combination of large scale investments, contributions of different stakeholders and social/cultural support measures, direct intervention took place in the demographic composition of

the district in terms of income categories and ethnic composition. For a further discussion on the impacts of such an approach a recent study of Nicis (2008) is relevant. It indicates that the structural approach is effective for the concerned district itself, but that more attention should be paid to the implications for other urban districts. There is the risk that inhabitants which are forced to leave because the apartment or house they live in is demolished, settle in neighbouring districts with a similar outlook and composition. The result could be that the receiving districts show further concentrations of in particular low-educated persons in relatively poor neighbourhoods. Problems faced in one particular urban district are after renewal transferred to the neighbouring district, the so-called 'waterbed' effect. The municipality of Arnhem is trying to address this issue through providing social housing in different parts of the city. However, it was confirmed that citizens often give preference to the neighbouring district when they have to move.

Of particular interest is the question to what extent the MOZC makes a contribution to social cohesion in the neighbourhood. Initial findings indicate that an incremental approach of neighbourhood development strengthens community sense and integration with large participation of citizens. However, newcomers with a different background and culture have difficulties getting accepted. The process works both ways. Ethnic minorities having their 'own' facilities do not mix with other communities and vice versa. The positive contribution of the MOZC is that it starts from a radical different perspective and tries to reach all communities. The MOZC was reasonably successful in that with first a decline in participation of community volunteers and now with an increase in numbers again and a much better mix in background. In terms of Robson et.al, the MOZC contributes to 'gentrification' of 'isolate areas' by providing a more dynamic perspective starting from children and their future.

Linking the MOZC to a school complex has advantages and disadvantages. A positive factor is that outreach through school is much easier to achieve. A negative aspect is that with the Dutch schooling system of having separate schools for different cultural identities (i/c. catholic, protestant, public and others) there is the risk of segregation of communities. Having one school in the neighbourhood to which all children go would be better in this respect.

For presenting a more definite opinion about the impact of the programme on living conditions and social cohesion in the urban district of Malburgen, further research is required. What stands is that the MOZC facility increases the attractiveness and liveability of Malburgen and contributes to making the life of especially children, women, ethnic minorities and the elderly more enjoyable by offering a wide range of high quality services in an attractive environment. Such an approach deserves a wider replication on a larger scale in other programmes.

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